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B'nai Brith Canada Criticizes Anti-Israel Group Over Frivolous Human Rights Complaint

TORONTO, August 7, 2009 – B'nai Brith Canada strongly condemns the Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) - Carleton University for following in the footsteps of other anti-Israel entities in abusing Canada's Human Rights Tribunals and Commissions with another frivolous complaint. The Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario recently agreed to mediate between the SAIA chapter and Carleton University over events that took place earlier this year, when the University used its good judgment to insist on the removal of an offensive antisemitic poster. The poster, which the SAIA group had put up as advertisement for Israel Apartheid Week, modernized the medieval blood libel accusing the Jews of murdering innocent children.

"The poster that this SAIA chapter put up was an affront and an offense to every person of goodwill," said Frank Dimant, Executive Vice President of B'nai Brith Canada. "The university was truly justified in using its good judgment to ensure the poster's removal.

"It is obvious that this maneuver to involve the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario is part of a new strategy being employed by those who wish to create a 'legal chill.' This new strategy is being propagated by those groups that cross the line from legitimate criticism of a democratic Israel to promoting propaganda against the Jewish State and, by extension, the Jewish people.

"We have recently seen other cases here in Canada which exemplify this new strategy of intimidation through 'legal chill': there was an attempt to muzzle Maclean's magazine, the Western Standard and Ezra Levant were dragged through tribunal hearings, and B'nai Brith Canada, for a period of five years, had to defend itself against a frivolous charge lodged with the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. In all of these cases, the charges were either withdrawn or the defendants won, but only after an enormous cost in terms of dollars and human resources.

"Serious reform is necessary to ensure the viability of our Human Rights Tribunals and Commissions. Canadians who believe in standing up for human rights should really be concerned that these types of frivolous complaints keep wasting valuable resources that could otherwise be spent fighting genuine human rights violations."

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B'nai Brith Canada has been active in Canada since 1875 as the Jewish community's foremost human rights agency